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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses creating story boards to help students with disabilities to develop effective career plans. It describes storyboarding as a technique for project planning which requires active involvement of both hemispheres of the brain. A group of 6-8 people, including students, teachers, counselors, and vocational rehabilitation representatives, form a planning team which meets for a creative thinking session that permits the free flow of ideas from all members of the team. This session is followed by a critical thinking session in which the creative ideas are scrutinized closely for viability and are retained or rejected by the team. Ideas are displayed in clear visual form on a story board as the planning session progresses to enable participants to see interrelationships among the ideas, to rearrange the ideas for clarity, and to hitchhike on ideas already presented. Finally, action plans are developed. The paper begins by describing the components of the storyboarding system, the project team, and storyboarding supplies. The major types of story boards and basic steps in using them are then discussed. Examples of a planning board, an ideas board, a communication board, and an organizational board are attached. (Contains 10 references.) (CR)

An Active Self-Determination Technique:

Involving Students in Effective Career Planning

ED 455 622

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The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA) mandates that goals and objectives enabling the student (by age 14) to make a smooth transition to the adult world upon completion of secondary school. One critical aspect of such transition planning is **self-determination**. The transition portion of the IEP must be student-centered; it must begin with the student's needs and desires for his/her future. In other words, the student must be intimately involved in the planning process, even to the point of conducting the IEP meeting.

IDEA itself mandates the use of a team approach to planning, and current emphasis in the field of education upon collaboration and shared decision-making reinforces the wisdom of involving all stake-holders in developing an action plan. It is an excellent idea to involve several student peers in the transition planning process; they can benefit from a sharing of experiences and ideas.

A creative and enjoyable, yet effective, method for transition planning is the use of **storyboarding** to develop the transition portions of the IEP. Storyboarding is a technique for project planning used by major corporations to develop and market new products and services, and to maintain an "edge" over their competitors. It is also used by hospitals and other agencies to ensure the delivery of high quality services (Barr, 1988; Caldwell, 1990; Hoover, 1980; Vance, 1982). It can be used just as effectively in planning successful individualized education and transition plans for students with (or without) disabilities (Lane & Shaver, 1992; Denison, 1995).

While storyboarding has a wide range of uses and can be helpful in the planning of many educational projects and programs, the focus of this paper is on the creation of story boards to help students with disabilities to develop effective career plans. As the process is described, it will become evident that the involvement of several students on the planning team will lead to more comprehensive planning, and will be fun for the students as well.

Field et al. (1998) have described a number of characteristics of self-determined individuals (p. 3). Several of these characteristics are central in the storyboarding process for planning IEPs: (a) awareness of personal preferences, interests, strengths, and limitations; (b) ability to make choices based on preferences, interests, wants, and needs; c) ability to consider multiple options and to anticipate consequences for decisions; (d) ability to initiate and take action when needed; (e) ability to set and work toward goals; (f) a striving for independence while recognizing interdependence on others; (g) self-advocacy skills; (h) ability to assume responsibility for actions and decisions; (I) self-confidence; (j) pride; (k) creativity.

What is Storyboarding?

Storyboarding is a technique for project planning which requires active

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involvement of both hemispheres of the brain. A group of 6-8 people, including students, teachers, counselors, and vocational rehabilitation representatives form a planning team which will meet for a **creative thinking session**. This session permits the free flow of ideas from all members of the team. This session is followed by a **critical thinking session** in which the creative ideas are scrutinized closely for viability and are retained or rejected by the team. The creative thinking session requires use of the right hemisphere of the brain; the critical thinking session the left hemisphere. Ideas are displayed in clear visual form on a story board as the planning sessions progress. The visual display enables participants to see interrelationships among the ideas, to rearrange the ideas for clarity, and ti "hitchhike" on ideas already presented. A single storyboarding session generates a large number of creative ideas while stimulating the energy level and creativity of the participants. Finally, action plans are developed for carrying out all steps needed to bring the project to completion.

The action plans which result from the storyboarding process serve as important **time management** aids for students who often have difficulty in this area. Students can visualize how crucial the timeliness of their actions can be to their successful job search and new living arrangements.

Components of the Storyboarding System

Every story board begins with a problem which needs to be solved or a need which must be addressed. Once a **need** for the storyboarding process has been determined, a project team is assembled as follows.

The Project Team

The project team consists of no more than eight members. If there are more than eight, every member will not be able to participate actively and the purpose will be defeated. Once the team is assembled, its members are assigned specific functions.

1. **Sanctioner**

The sanctioner (in this case, a teacher, counselor, or administrator who has the authority to commit resources) is the person who has the authority to "OK" the project, who is able to give the "go ahead" to the rest of the team. The sanctioner need not be an actively participating member of the team.

2. **Project Leader**

The project leader is the person who makes sure that the team meets on time, and generally monitors the team's progress. This will usually be the special education teacher or supervisor.

3. **Facilitator**

The facilitator plays the most demanding role on the team. The facilitator keeps ideas flowing by asking leading questions that cause the team to view the question from many different angles. He/she also monitors the group for "killer" statements--

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critical (negative) comments which are NOT allowed during the creative thinking session. In keeping with the spirit of IDEA, the student should be encouraged to take this role, with occasional assistance from the teacher or counselor if needed.

4. **Writer**

The writer has the task of jotting down suggestions made by members of the team on index cards or Post-It notes which will then be affixed to the board. In an especially freewheeling session, each participant may jot down his or her own ideas. Having a writer is especially important when there are students on the team who have extreme difficulty with writing, because the process should proceed as rapidly as possible.

5. **Pinner**

The pinner takes the note cards from the writer(s) and pins or sticks them to the story board in the appropriate place. The importance of this role is evident when ideas are flowing rapidly. Getting ideas onto the board quickly is important because the visual stimulus of each idea card may generate more ideas from other team members. It is reinforcing to the participants to watch the board "grow."

Storyboarding Supplies

The storyboarding process requires the following supplies:

1, **Bulletin boards** or other boards on which index cards or Post-It notes can be placed for display. The larger the board, the better. When using Post-It notes or index cards and "restickable" glue sticks, a blank wall may substitute for the board.

2. **Index Cards or Post-It Notes**

Storyboarding, as used traditionally in business applications, has used index cards. The convention for using index cards will be described, although it is now possible to use Post-It notes instead.

Three sets of index cards should be available for the **planning** and **ideas** boards:

(a) **Topic cards** are 5" x 8" blue index cards. A few of these will suffice; they are used at the top of each story board for stating the topic (the problem to be solved).

(b) **Header cards** are 4" x 6" salmon index cards which are used to head up each major subdivision of the lists of ideas.

c) **Subber cards** are 3" x 5" yellow index cards used for listing each creative idea generated during the brainstorming session. At least 20 cards are needed for each team member.

(**Note:** The colors suggested for the cards are conventions. Any three colors may be used. The use of different colors and sizes reflects the fact that storyboarding is a **visual** activity. The users distinguish at a glance the three levels of ideas. The new brightly colored post-it notes are very popular with students.)

3. **Pushpins** or **Restickable Glue Sticks**

Many pushpins are needed--at least two boxes of 100 for the planning team. Of course, if Post-It notes are used instead of index cards, pushpins will not be necessary. Also, the new "restickable" glue sticks may be used instead of pushpins.

The Major Types of Story Boards and Basic Steps in Using Them

The Planning Board

The Planning Story Board is the master control board for the project, so it is necessary to start with this board. The project director assembles the project team, and the facilitator ensures that the problem to be solved is stated clearly and understood by the entire team. A clear statement of the problem is written on a blue 5" x 8" index card, which is then pinned at the top of the story board. The topic card serves to keep the team focused upon the problem throughout the session.

Next the purpose for solving the problem **must** be stated. A 4" x 6" salmon **header** card is labeled "Purpose" and pinned underneath the topic card and to the far left, at the beginning of what will become a row of header cards. Each header card contains a clear statement of one of the major subdivisions of the problem to be solved. For example, it the problem were "to plan a vacation trip," possible headers might be "where to go," "how to fund," "what to do on the trip," and "what to wear." Two header cards are **required** for all Planning Boards: **Purpose** and **Miscellaneous**. The purpose will influence greatly the way in which the board develops, and especially will influence the other headers and the ideas that will be generated underneath them. Always in planning there must be a "miscellaneous" category to use as a catch-all for ideas which don't seem to fit anywhere else. The actual number of header cards beyond the purpose and miscellaneous cards is limited only by the imagination of the project team.

Some ideas which will be generated will be possible answers to questions raised by the header cards. For example, under the "destination" header for planning a trip, there could be a tremendous number of ideas, each of which would be jotted down on a 3" x 5" yellow subber card and pinned on the board. Ideas for the possible destination for the trip will, of course, be guided by the purpose(s) for which the trip is being taken.

During the development of the Planning Board, as creative ideas are being called out, jotted down, and pinned to the board, it is essential that **all** ideas mentioned should be included. There are to be to be **NO** negative (killer) statements! The facilitator must ensure that **all** ideas, however bizarre they may be, are included and pinned on the board.

Team members are urged to **hitchhike** on the ideas of the other members by adding to and developing an idea already on the board.

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Following this brainstorming session, the project team should take a break, possibly until the next school day. When scheduling does not permit another meeting the next day, the team should at least take a break to "shift mental gears." In the meantime, the planning board should remain in place and on display for the possible addition of new ideas.

Upon returning from the break, the **critical thinking session** begins. During this session, under the leadership of the facilitator, each idea on the board should be examined critically. Objections should be raised at this point. Any ideas that seem too "weird" to be usable should be discarded. In general, this is the best time to decide which of the ideas on the board will work best. After the rejected ideas are discarded, the final planning board which results will be used to guide the remainder of the planning processes used to solve the problem.

The Ideas Board

Development of the **Ideas Boards** begins a new round of activity, and actually there are likely to be a number of ideas boards resulting from a single planning board. For the ideas boards, each **header card** from the planning board becomes a **topic** card and the **subbers** under each planning board header become **headers** for their respective topic cards. It is often possible to combine several headers from the planning board into one topic. In this case, there will be as many ideas boards as there are combined topics. If the headers cannot be combined, there will be as many ideas boards as there are headers on the planning board.

For each ideas board the process of developing of developing the planning board is repeated. First there is a creative thinking session, then a critical thinking session follows. (For **every** ideas board there must be a "purpose" and a "miscellaneous" header.) By the time all of the ideas boards are completed, a very clear plan for solving the initial problem will exist.

While the process described above may sound time consuming, the results justify the time. Students are amazed at how much they really need to learn and to accomplish in order to effect a successful transition. And they themselves will have done the planning! They surprise themselves with the breadth and depth of the ideas they as a team have developed.

The Communications Board

Once the ideas boards have been completed, the student should recognize that many people will involved in bringing the plan to fruition. The student will need to interact with these people, and he/she must be the one to initiate the interaction. By developing a **communications** board the student will discover exactly whom these people are, what they need to know, when they need to know it, and how they could best be informed (e.g., by phone call, letter, e-mail, personal visit, etc.) Thus the first

step in proficient self-advocacy is begun--that of knowing what must be accomplished, and when, and how.

While this board will differ a bit for each individual student, there will be many commonalities which make collaborative team planning worthwhile. For example, all students wanting to enter the workforce will need to write an effective resume, write a captivating cover letter, know how to fill out an application, etc. They will need to know how to find job openings for which they are qualified. They will need to know how to dress, how to present themselves, and how to interview. A "generic" communications board would be an invaluable aid in helping each student individualize his/her "final" plan.

The process of creating a communications board is motivating and energizing to students--it indicates that they are reaching the action phase of their career plans, and will soon be taking the important steps necessary for securing their futures. And, best of all, each student will have been instrumental in determining what those steps will be and what he/she must do. Action is about to be initiated!

The communication story board is set up differently from the planning and ideas boards. There is no convention for the size and color of cards to be used--but they should be two different sizes and colors. The larger size will be used for the headers. It is useful to have two different colors of subber cards since the "What," "When," and "How" columns are in response to the person in the "Who" column. It helps avoid confusion if the rows are done in alternate colors. There will be four columns, each with a header card:

WHO needs to know?	**WHAT do they need to know?**	**WHEN do they need to know it?**	**HOW will they be informed?**

Subbers under the "Who" column should include such persons as possible references, a resume preparation helper, possible businesses to contact, possible landlords, etc.

In preparing the "What" column the student should become aware that each "Who" will need different information and should be told only as much as they need to know.

The "When" column is critical for students who often lack a good sense of time and may have poor time management skills. Deadlines matter. If the student doesn't know the deadline for various contacts, the guidance counselor can help, as can the rehabilitation counselor.

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The "How" column is a convenient tool for teaching or reviewing the importance of written documentation. It may also provide a situation for teaching the student to send a fax. At any rate, students will be reinforced for their efforts when replies to their communications begin to arrive.

The Organization Board

The **organization board** is the final step in the total storyboarding process, and a critical one in the development of self-advocacy skills. Like the communications board, this board will contain much information common to several students. Then each student can individualize the plan as needed. There may be some overlap with the communications board, but the organization board will flesh out many new steps needed for actualizing the total plan. (Again, there is no convention for the color of the cards to be used. It is helpful to alternate colors with each row.)

The organization board will have three headers:

What TASKS need to be done in implementing this plan?	**WHO is to implement them?**	**WHEN must this step be implemented?**

Subbers under "tasks" may include such steps as "Fill out application," "ask teachers to write references," and "send out resumes." The "Who is to implement" for the steps listed above might be: "me" (the student), "high school office," "three teachers" (name them), "counselor," "vocational rehabilitation counselor," and "parents."

The organization board is a very practical tool for ensuring that the various steps in implementing the plan are done in a timely manner, and for spelling out specific responsibilities for bringing about the solution to the original problem.

Some General Comments about Storyboarding

Although the process described above may **sound** complicated, it is easily put into action, and once a group becomes proficient in storyboarding they will discover how useful a tool the story board is for efficient and effective planning and problem solving. In the future, the proficient student can utilize the process to plan a career change, plan further education, plan a wedding, a wardrobe, a vacation, a party. There are a seemingly infinite number of uses for storyboarding.

Storyboarding is a visual and tactile process which helps everyone on the team see exactly how the plan is taking shape. The cards can be rearranged as the plan develops. The final **planning** board which results after all the desired manipulations

have been completed can serve as an outline for writing up the plan into document form. Or, the cards can be taped onto a large sheet of newsprint and kept in that format for later use by the student or project team.

One great strength of the approach, aside from its multisensory aspect, is that it involves all members of the project team in a very **active** way. (Special education students have for too long been passive learners!) Students will feel more committed to a plan which they have had an active role in developing. The storyboarding technique is thus an ideal application of the cooperative learning approach.

Finally, through active participation in the planning process and in developing their personal action plan, students are enabled in the difficult skill of becoming self-advocates, and will have taken a major step toward self-determination.

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PLANNING BOARD EXAMPLE

TOPIC: GOING FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

HEADER: PURPOSE	HEADER: CHOOSE A COLLEGE	HEADER: COURSES TO TAKE NOW	HEADER: MONEY-HOW TO PAY FOR	HEADER: WHAT TO DO TO GET READY	HEADER: MISCELLANEOUS
Subtopic: LEARN A GOOD JOB	Subtopic: ONE THAT WILL ACCEPT ME	Subtopic: ENGLISH	Subtopic: PARENTS	Subtopic: GET CATALOGS	Subtopic: WHAT TO WEAR
MAKE MORE MONEY	ONE I CAN AFFORD	COMPUTERS	PART TIME JOB	FILL OUT APPLICATIONS	FIND ROOMMATES
GET A COLLEGE DEGREE	COMMUNITY COLLEGE	WRITING	GET A LOAN	TAKE SAT'S	LIVE AWAY FROM HOME
PROVE I CAN DO IT	STATE UNIVERSITY	MATH	GET A GRANT	LEARN TO USE A COMPUTER	LIVE IN DORM
MAKE NEW FRIENDS	VOC-TECH	BUSINESS MATH	GET A SCHOLARSHIP	RAISE MY GPA	LIVE IN APARTMENT
PLAY A SPORT	GOOD ART PROGRAM	ALGEBRA	FULL TIME JOB	PRACTICE SWIMMING & BASKETBALL	STAY HOME AND COMMUTE
FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF	SWIM TEAM AND BASKETBALL TEAM	BIOLOGY		LEARN TO USE MY TIME WISELY	BUY A COMPUTER
LEARN ABOUT BUSINESS				STUDY!	TUTORING
MAKE PARENTS HAPPY					

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IDEAS BOARD EXAMPLE

TOPIC

WHAT TO DO TO GET READY

HEADER	HEADER	HEADER	HEADER	HEADER	HEADER
PURPOSE	GET CATALOGS	FILL OUT APPLICATIONS	TAKE SAT	LEARN TO USE A COMPUTER	MISCELLANEOUS
Subber	Subber	Subber	Subber	Subber	Subber
MAKE SURE I GET ACCEPTED	GET CATALOG FROM ST. JOSEPH'S	TYPE OR WRITE?	WHEN SHOULD I TAKE?	MAC OR PC?	CAN I GET TUTORING?
KNOW WHAT I'M GETTING INTO	FROM NC STATE	DECIDE WHAT TO MAJOR IN	HOW MANY TIME CAN I TAKE?	LEARN WORD PROCESSING	CAN I TAKE TESTS UNTIMED?
MAKE GOOD GRADES IN COLLEGE	FROM HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE	FIND THREE REFERENCES	WHAT SCORES DO I HAVE TO MAKE?	LEARN TO TYPE A TERM PAPER	CLOTHES
GET INTO A MAJOR I CAN FINISH	FROM KEAN STATE	WRITE ESSAY TO GO WITH APPLICATION	CAN I GET SPECIAL ARRANGE-MENTS?	LEARN CHARTS AND GRAPHS	TRANSPOR-TATION?
GET THE HS COURSES I NEED	ASK COUNSELOR WHAT COLLEGES ARE GOOD		WHERE DO I GO TO TAKE IT?	LEARN WORD PERFECT	MAKE VISITS TO COLLEGES?
			HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?		CLUBS TO JOIN?
			DO I HAVE TO TAKE IT?		GET HELP WITH ESSAY
			HOW TO STUDY FOR IT?		

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COMMUNICATIONS BOARD
EXAMPLE

HEADER WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?	HEADER WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW?	HEADER WHEN DO THEY NEED TO KNOW?	HEADER HOW WILL THEY BE INFORMED?
Subhead	Subhead	Subhead	Subhead
COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OFFICES (6)	I WANT TO APPLY	MAY 15 OF MY JUNIOR YEAR	LETTER
FINANCIAL AID OFFICE	I NEED MONEY TO ATTEND COLLEGE	SEPTEMBER 30 OF MY SENIOR YEAR	LETTER AND APPLICATION FORM
STUDENT SERVICES OFFICE	I WANT TO LIVE IN A DORM ROOM (NONSMOKERS)	APRIL 30 OF MY SENIOR YEAR	LETTER AND APPLICATION FORM
MY GUIDANCE COUNSELOR	I'M PLANNING TO GO TO COLLEGE	NOW!	I WILL VISIT THE COUNSELOR IN PERSON
MATH TEACHER (MR. WILLIAMS)	I NEED A REFERENCE LETTER	BEFORE MAY 15. BY MAY 1	I'LL ASK IN PERSON
COMPUTER TEACHER (Ms. ANDREWS)	I NEED A REFERENCE LETTER	BY MAY 1	I'LL ASK
BIOLOGY TEACHER (MR. PETERS)	I NEED A REFERENCE LETTER	BY MAY 1	I'LL ASK
COLLEGE SWIM TEAM COACH	I WANT TO SWIM FOR STATE'S TEAM	NOW	LETTER AND PHONE CALL – MAKE APPOINTMENT
PARENTS	WHERE I WANT TO GO, HOW MUCH IT WILL COST	NOW	I'LL TALK TO THEM
SPECIAL SERVICES OFFICE AT STATE	I HAVE A DISABILITY	APRIL 30 OF MY SENIOR YEAR	I'LL CALL AND MAKE APPOINTMENT TO VISIT

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ORGANIZATION BOARD EXAMPLE

HEADER WHAT TASKS NEED TO BE DONE	HEADER WHO IS TO IMPLEMENT THEM	HEADER WHEN MUST STEP BE IMPLEMENTED
Subtitle	Subtitle	Subtitle
CONTACT ADMISSIONS OFFICE	ME	BY MAY 15
CONTACT FINANCIAL AID OFFICE	ME	BY NEXT SEPTEMBER 15
SEND IN ADMISSIONS APPLICATION	ME	BY NOV. 15 (NEXT NOV.)
SEND IN ADMISSIONS DEPOSIT	MY PARENTS	BY NEXT NOV. 15
LETTERS OF REFERRAL SENT	MS. ANDREWS MR. WILLIAMS MR. PETERS	BY NOV. 15
REGISTER FOR SAT	ME	BY JAN. 1
PAY REGISTR. FEE FOR SAT	PARENTS	WITH JAN 1 REGISTRATION FORM
TALK TO TEACHERS ABOUT RAISING MY GPA	ME	NOW!
ARRANGE FOR H.S. TUTOR	COUNSELOR	AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

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